



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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*Washington, D.C.* -- The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that the name of the new national cemetery in northeastern Ohio will be the "Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery."

The 274-acre site, located in Medina County, is approximately 45 miles south of Cleveland and 15 miles west of Akron. More than 500,000 veterans and their families live within 75 miles of the site. Currently, the nearest VA national cemetery is Dayton National Cemetery, located in southwest Ohio.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Togo D. West Jr. said, "It is fitting that the name of this new national cemetery reflect the rich tradition and historical significance of the area. The Department is committed to developing this important national shrine in a manner befitting the sacrifices of those who fought for this country."

The name refers to the part of the Northwest Territory that was formerly known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, a tract of land in northeast Ohio reserved by the State of Connecticut when it ceded its claims for western lands to the U.S. Government in 1786.

In 1795, Connecticut sold the land, except for the western 500,000 acres, to a group of investors known as The Connecticut Land Company. The company assigned Moses Cleaveland, for whom the city of Cleveland was named, to oversee a settlement survey of the property. The Western Reserve and other parts of the Ohio Valley Region were later incorporated to form Ohio in 1802.

In June 1998, VA awarded an \$11.1 million contract to Welty Building Company of Akron, Ohio, to construct the cemetery's first phase development. An initial burial area is expected to be available for interments in late 1999 with a dedication date to be determined.

The 65-acre initial construction phase calls for 15,900 full-casket gravesites and 3,000 sites for cremated remains, including 2,000 columbaria niches and 1,000 garden niches. The plan also includes construction of an administration and maintenance complex, two committal service shelters, a cemetery entrance area, roadways, landscaping, utilities and an irrigation system.

Veterans with discharges other than dishonorable, their spouses and dependent children are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. VA also provides grave markers or headstones for the unmarked graves of eligible veterans even if they are not buried in a national cemetery. VA does not reserve space in national cemeteries prior to time of need. Information on VA burial benefits is available from national cemetery offices and VA regional offices.

For more information, call 1-800-827-1000, or visit the VA website on the internet at <http://www.va.gov> or the National Cemetery Administration website at <http://www.cem.va.gov>.